Women's Studies 3133 FDE:

Women, Technology, and Cyberculture

Fall 2021

Lecturer: **Megan MacKenzie**

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Lecture time: **Mondays 2:30pm-5:30pm**

Place: **Online/Zoom (D2L)**

Office hours: By appointment

Welcome to Women's Studies 3133 Special Topics: Technofeminism and cyberfeminism. This course will examine gender and technology, past and present. We will consider cyborgs, posthumanism, cyber-performance, and more. Students will explore the theoretical grounding of, and debates within, cyberfeminism, rethink their bodies in relation to machines, consider the gendered implications of Cybernia [the online world] itself, and how it intersects IRL (in real life). Students will consider these themes and more as we deconstruct relevant films and television shows according to techno- and cyberfeminist theory.

Texts: All required texts and media will be available on D2L

Assignments and Grading:

Participation:	10% *ongoing*
Article Summary:	10% *due October 18*
Reading Responses:	20% (10% each) *#1 due weeks 2-6, #2 due weeks 7-11*
Film Responses:	30% (15% each) *#1 due Oct 8, #2 due November 26*
Final Paper:	30% *due December 13*

Late Assignments will result in a grade deduction of 5% per day

Participation 10%

Please Note: All participants have the right to hold, defend, and promote their views. However, this right exists alongside regulations that protect an individual's right to education without discrimination or harassment on the basis of gender, race, colour, religion, class, sexual orientation, ability, age, place of origin, etc. Students are required to respect these social and cultural differences. Intents to insult an individual or group of individuals on the basis of their gender, race, etc. and words or symbols that convey hatred or contempt constitute harassment and will not be tolerated. Respect for differences in political awareness and educational development is essential.

Class Discussions

Each week you will be expected to complete readings and come to class prepared to discuss them. Complete the following questions as you do the readings and bring them to class to share:

1. What do you believe each text is saying? List the main points and summary
2. Choose 2-3 quotes from each reading that resonates with you. Why is this quote meaningful/important? How does it relate to the text?
3. Come prepared with 1-2 questions for the class regarding each reading

Since this class is online you will also have the chance to participate in discussions on the D2L discussion boards. I will post questions there during class time and give everyone a chance to answer. I will also post questions related to the films that we watch which I will give you time to answer at the end of class. I will lock the film discussion boards on <mark>Tuesday after 8pm</mark>.

You will be marked on participation in our verbal discussions as well as our written discussions.

Participation rubric (Allegheny College)

A grade: You regularly *initiate* discussion. This means coming to class thoroughly familiar with the assigned reading and prepared to raise questions, to open discussion, to identify topics of interest in the reading, and to actively engage other students in the discussion. (Obviously this does not mean monopolizing a discussion, or shutting others out, or talking for its own sake rather than to make a point about the topic under discussion).

B grade: You participate regularly and productively. This means coming to class prepared and willing to engage. You differ from A-grade discussants in that the latter are self-starters, who do not rely on the instructor's questions to set the agenda for discussion.

C grade: You participate on a regular basis, though less frequently than a B-grade student. C-grade discussants' participation may indicate that they are not well-prepared for class, or have not given thought to the assigned materials.

D grade: You contribute only infrequently to the discussion. D-grade discussants' indicate that they are not well-prepared for class, or have not given thought to the assigned materials.

F grade: You do not participate in class discussion. Participation is impossible if the putative participant does not attend class. Frequent absences mandate F grades. Participation that consistently iterates positions which contravene the *Ontario Human Rights Code* will also garner an F grade.

Article Summary 10%

Find an article (NOT one of the readings) that relates to technofeminism or cyberfeminism and write a reflection on it. Be sure to:

1. Summarize the article
2. Include two quotations (properly cited), explain what they mean and why they're important
3. Connect your article to the themes of this course
4. Include the source (MLA format)
5. Post your summary to the discussion board (we will go through the articles on the last day of class)

The summary should be at least 500 words and can be written informally (use of "I" is acceptable).

Reading Responses (10% x 2) 20%

250 – 500 words each, Times New Roman, double-spaced, one-inch margins.
Due:
==Response #1 will be on one reading during the 1st half of the term (Wks. 2-5)==

==Response #2 will be on one reading during the 2nd half of the term (Wks. 6-11)==

Choose one of our readings to respond to and hand it in <u>before</u> we discuss that article in class. Example: You choose an article for week 5. You have until Monday at 2:30pm on Week 5 to submit it.

You will choose the readings to which you want to respond. Your responses will be thoughtful engagements with your chosen reading, so choose a reading that inspires you to think, question your world, or laugh out loud! They can be informal, and informal does not mean sloppy or unprofessional. Your responses will describe the new lines of thought or inquiry that the reading opened up to you (what did it make you think about?), they will raise any possible critiques of the author's analysis (e.g.: does the author essentialize "woman"? when the author uses the word "sexuality" do they really mean heterosexuality? are any groups ignored or symbolically annihilated by the research presented? etc.), and they will show me that you have not only done the reading, but that you have engaged with it actively and analytically.

Film Responses (15% x 2) 30%

You will choose two films to view and complete a cyberfeminist analysis of. Each film response will be 2-3 pages long, Times New Roman, double-spaced, one-inch margins. You may choose to do one of the films we have watched in class, but be sure that any analysis that you do goes much farther than the analysis available on our discussion boards.

==Film Response #1 due October 8th by midnight==

Final Paper 30%

1500 – 1800 words, Times New Roman, double-spaced, one-inch margins.

Choose from the following questions and write an academic paper. I will expect to see formal writing conventions, although you can write in the First Person, and at least two (2) articles external of course readings used to support your assertions, arguments, and examples.

- What are the social implications of gendered technology?

- Is posthumanism liberating or oppressive? Or both? Why?

- Is women's online activism effective?

Due December 13

Plagiarism

Students are expected to know the University's policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty

http://calendar.lakeheadu.ca/current/contents/regulations/univregsIXacdishon.html

Academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Dean of Graduate Studies, along with evidence of plagiarism, for their evaluation and penalization. The minimum penalty will be a zero for the assignment and the maximum penalty will be a zero for the course. If the Instructor believes, in her professional assessment, that the plagiarism is accidental due to sloppy work and editing, she will ask the student to re-edit and re-submit the assignment correcting the problem, with a cover letter indicating where the plagiarism was, why it was plagiarism, and how it has been corrected by the student. Second copies which still contain plagiarism will be forwarded to the Dean for penalization.

Special Needs

If you require accommodations please ensure you are registered with the Student Accessibility Service so that they may let me know of your needs.

On Campus Help Available to Students:

Student Success Centre: Additional help regarding academic matters can be found at the Student Success Centre located in SC 0008 or phone 343-8018 or online at - http://academicadvising.lakeheadu.ca

Student Accessibility Services: For assistance with accommodations for a disability, please visit Student Accessibility Services located in SC 0003 or phone 343-8047 or online at - http://learningassistance.lakeheadu.ca

Student Health and Counselling Centre: For help with personal and/or medical issues, please visit the Student Health and Counselling Centre located in the Prettie Residence or phone 343-8361 or online at http://healthservices.lakeheadu.ca

Week 1 September 13th

<u>Introduction</u>

Wajcman, Judy. *Technofeminism*. Polity Press, 2006. 1-31

Hayles, N. Katherine. "How we became posthuman: Virtual bodies in cybernetics, literature, and informatics." (2000): *xi-xiv*

Matrix, V. N. S. "Cyberfeminist manifesto for the 21st century." *Autonomous Artists@ System. X* (1991).

Mulvey, Laura. "Visual pleasure and narrative cinema." *Visual and other pleasures*. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 1989. 14-26

Week 2 September 20th

<u>Cyberfeminism</u>

Plant, Sadie. *Zeros and ones: The matrix of women + machines*. Vol. 4. London, 1997. 11-18, 23-27, 34-37

Hawthorne, Susan, and Renate Klein, eds. *Cyberfeminism: Connectivity, critique and creativity*. Spinifex Press, 1999. 1-16

Film: Ex Machina

Week 3 September 27th

Guest lecturer Dr. Jenny Roth: tech in *Dracula*

Week 4 October 4th

Woman as Interface

Munn, Luke. "Alexa and the Intersectional Interface." *Angles. New Perspectives on the Anglophone World* 7 (2018).

Sadie Plant, "On the Matrix: Cyberfeminist Simulations." *The Gendered Cyborg: A Reader*. Eds. Gill Kirkup et. al. London: Routledge, 2000. 265-275.

Film: The Stepford Wives

Film response due this Friday

Reading Week

Week 5 October 18th

Haraway and Cyborg Feminism

Haraway, Donna J. "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980's." *The Gendered Cyborg a Reader*, by Fiona Hovenden et al., Taylor and Francis, 2000. 50-57

Esperanza Miyake, "My, Is That Cyborg a Little Bit Queer?" *Journal of International Women's Studies* 5.2 (2004). 53-61.

Film: Blade Runner 2045

Final day to submit 1st reading response

Week 6 October 25th

Cyber Race

Readings:

Tanner Higgin, "Blackless Fantasy: The Disappearance of Race in Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games." *Games & Culture* 4.1 (2009): 3-26.

Jakubowicz, Andrew. "Alt_Right White Lite: trolling, hate speech and cyber racism on social media." *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 9.3 (2017): 41-60.

Film: TBD

Week 7 November 1ˢᵗ

Cyber Queer

Readings:

Mary Bryson et. al., "Virtually Queer? Homing Devices, Mobility, and Un/Belongings." *Canadian Journal of Communication* 31.4 (2006): 791

Herrera, Andrea P. "Theorizing the lesbian hashtag: Identity, community, and the technological imperative to name the sexual self." *Journal of lesbian studies* 22.3 (2018): 313-328.

Optional reading:
Marciano, Avi. "Living the VirtuReal: Negotiating transgender identity in cyberspace." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 19.4 (2014): 824-838.

Film: Black Mirror episode

Week 8 November 8ᵗʰ

Guest lecturer Sarah Sommers: Online Sex Work

Week 9 November 15ᵗʰ

Avatars, gender, and power

Lavigne, Carlen. "" I'm Batman"(and You Can Be Too):" Gender" and Constrictive Play in the" Arkham" Game Series." *Cinema Journal* 55.1 (2015): 133-141.

Jacobi, Philip. "Daddy Issues: Wet T-Shirt Feminism and the Contemporary Video Game Heroine." *2017 Regensburg*: 233.

Film: TBD

Week 10 November 22ⁿᵈ

The disembodied woman

Yoon, Hyungjoo. "Digital flesh: a feminist approach to the body in cyberspace." *Gender and Education* 33.5 (2021): 578-593.

Escudero Perez, Jimena. ""An AI doesn't need a gender "(but it's still assigned one): paradigm shift of the artificially created woman in film." *Feminist Media Studies* 20.3 (2020): 325-340.

Film: TBD

Film response due this Friday

Week 11 November 29th

<u>Online Activism</u>

Ghadery, Farnush. "# Metoo—has the 'sisterhood'finally become global or just another product of neoliberal feminism?." *Transnational Legal Theory* 10.2 (2019): 252-274.

Jane, Emma A. "Online misogyny and feminist digilantism." *Continuum* 30.3 (2016): 284-297.

Final day to submit 2nd reading response

Week 12 December 6th

<u>Reflections of Cyberfeminism</u>

No readings due

Final paper due next Monday December 13